

In the Claims

1-21 (canceled).

22 (currently amended). A process for the production of purified IL-18BP interleukin-18 binding protein (IL-18BP) comprising loading a fluid selected from urine or cell culture supernatant and containing IL-18BP onto a hydrophobic charge-induction chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP.

23 (previously presented). The process according to claim 22, wherein the hydrophobic charge-induction chromatography resin is a 4-mercapto-ethyl-pyridine (MEP) resin.

24 (currently amended). The process according to claim 22, further comprising loading a fluid an eluate containing IL-18BP onto a chromatography resin selected from immobilized metal ion affinity chromatography resin, ion exchange chromatography resin, hydrophobic interaction chromatography resin and reverse phase chromatography resin.

25 (currently amended). The process according to claim 23, further comprising loading a fluid an eluate containing IL-18BP onto a chromatography resin selected from immobilized metal ion affinity chromatography resin, ion exchange chromatography resin, hydrophobic interaction chromatography resin and reverse phase chromatography resin.

26 (withdrawn). The process according to claim 24, wherein the metal ion affinity chromatography is carried out on a chelating resin.

27 (withdrawn). The process according to claim 24, wherein the ion exchange chromatography is cation exchange chromatography.

28 (withdrawn). The process according to claim 27, wherein the cation exchange chromatography is carried out on a carboxymethyl (CM) resin.

29 (withdrawn). The process according to claim 24, wherein the hydrophobic interaction chromatography is carried out on a phenyl resin.

30 (withdrawn). The process according to claim 24, wherein the step of reverse phase chromatography is carried out on a polymeric reverse phase matrix.

31 (withdrawn). The process according to claim 30, wherein the polymeric reverse phase matrix is reverse phase-source 30 RPC.

32 (currently amended). The process according to claim 22, ~~comprising the steps of~~
wherein said process comprises:

- (a) loading an IL-18BP containing fluid selected from urine or cell culture supernatant onto a metal ion affinity chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin;
- (b) loading the IL-18BP containing eluate of the metal ion affinity chromatography step onto a hydrophobic charge-induction chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin;
- (c) loading the IL-18BP containing eluate of the hydrophobic charge-induction chromatography step onto a cation exchange chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin;
- (d) loading the IL-18BP containing eluate of the cation exchange chromatography step onto a hydrophobic interaction chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin; and
- (e) loading the IL-18BP containing eluate of the hydrophobic interaction chromatography step onto a reverse phase chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin and recovering the eluted IL-18BP.

33 (previously presented). The process according to claim 22, further comprising one or more ultrafiltration steps.

34 (previously presented). The process according to claim 32, further comprising one or more ultrafiltration steps.

35 -37 (canceled).

38 (previously presented). The process according to claim 22, comprising an initial capture step.

39 (previously presented). The process according to claim 38, wherein the capture step is carried out by strong anion exchange chromatography.

40 (previously presented). The process according to claim 39, wherein the capture step is carried out on a quaternary ammonium (Q) resin.

41 (previously presented). The process according to claim 39, wherein the capture step is carried out on a TMAE resin.

42 (previously presented). The process according to claim 22, wherein said IL-18BP is human, recombinant IL-18BP.

43 (previously presented). The process according to claim 22, wherein the IL-18BP containing fluid is serum-free cell culture supernatant.

44 (currently amended). The process according to claim 22, wherein said process also comprises one or more steps comprising loading a fluid an eluate containing IL-18BP onto:

- (a) a metal ion affinity chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin;
- ~~(b) a hydrophobic charge-induction chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin;~~
- ~~(e)(b)~~ a cation exchange chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin;
- ~~(d)(c)~~ a hydrophobic interaction chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin; or
- ~~(e)(d)~~ a reverse phase chromatography resin and eluting the IL-18BP from said resin.

45 (previously presented). The process according to claim 44, wherein said process comprises a combination of more than one of said steps.